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ANALYSIS OF THE BATTLE
OF BULL RUN - 1861

MAJOR RAYMOND E. GRIFFITHS 84-1095

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
requirements for graduation.

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PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The "Civil War presents an excellent field of study" for analyzing the principles of war. (6:Foreword) The purpose of this project is to take the first major battle of the Civil War, the Battle of Bull Run - 1861, and discuss how those principles of war contained in AFM 1-1 were effectively and ineffectively applied in the strategy and tactics used by Union and Confederate leaders. A corollary purpose is to determine how the outcome was affected. To achieve this purpose the project will be presented in three sections. Section one will describe the battle. Section two will analyze the battle using the principles of war, and finally section three will provide a seminar guidance package to stimulate discussion of those principles of war.

Section One
THE BATTLE OF BULL RUN

OVERVIEW

The Confederacy's overt challenges to the Federal form of government polarized national objectives and determined military strategy of the North and the South leading to the first major battle of the Civil War, the Battle of Bull Run-1861. (11:1-9) The southern states challenged the federal government by seceding individually to preserve states rights, and then by collectively organizing the Confederate States of America (CSA) in February 1861 to defend those rights. This was a substantial challenge to the Union, but the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861 was the final overt challenge to Federal sovereignty that could not be ignored. (11:65-90) To meet the challenge, President Lincoln called for 75,000 troops to serve for three months. The Union's national objective was to reunite the states and its military strategy was to take the offensive. The Confederate's national objective was to remain independent and they developed a defensive strategy. (6:Foreword-1).

The conflict between the national objectives lead to the first major battle of the Civil War involving armies "...vastly greater than had ever before fought on this continent..." (9:219) The purpose of this section is to describe that battle at Bull

Run. I will describe the battle in four phases. In phase one, "Pre-Battle", I will discuss the Union and Confederate military objectives, leaders, deployment of forces, and their strategies. The second phase, "McDowell's Success" will describe the initial advantage gained by the Union, and next, the "Stalemate at Henry House Hill" will show how Stonewall Jackson and the Confederates regrouped and checked the Union advance. Finally, the fourth phase, "The Battle Turns" will describe the Confederate attack and maneuver which ended the battle in their favor.

PRE-BATTLE

The Union military leaders, when pressured, established a military objective, developed a strategy, and deployed their forces. General Winfield Scott was Chief of the Union Army. He did not want to use the "three months" men called up after Fort Sumter. (4:103) However, when the cry arose in the North of "On to Richmond," political pressure mounted for action. (9:176; 11:126-27) Reacting to this pressure, the Union military leaders established the objectives of driving the Confederate forces away from Washington, D. C. and capturing Manassas Junction, Virginia, 30 miles to the southwest, along with its strategic railhead. General McDowell, who commanded the Union Army of Northeast Virginia, developed the strategy to meet this objective. His plan had two parts. First, he would attack from Washington, D. C. with 40,000 troops, and outflank an estimated Confederate force at Manassas of 35,000 troops. Secondly, a Union army under General Patterson would contain the Confederate forces in the

Shenandoah Valley and prevent them from joining the Confederate forces at Manassas. (5:47-76; 6:5) On 16 July 1861, McDowell departed Washington with 35,000 inexperienced troops to implement his plan, and General Patterson with 14,000 troops was ordered to hold the Confederate army in the Shenandoah Valley. (5:47-76)

The day McDowell left for Manassas, the Confederate defensive posture was inadequate to counter him. Consistent with their strategy, the Confederacy positioned two armies in Virginia to defend that border state from Union aggression. One army of 14,000 troops was under General Beauregard at Manassas and one army of 11,000 was under General Johnston in the Shenandoah Valley. (9:177; 6:5) (See Figure 1) The Confederates also realized the strategic value of Manassas. It was close to Washington and its railhead provided troop movement capability to and from the Shenandoah Valley. (9:196) With a force much smaller than McDowell had estimated, Beauregard planned to take advantage of the natural barrier provided by the creek of Bull Run and to use a strategy of interior lines. Using these lines he concentrated the majority of his forces at the most direct route to Manassas, assuming he would be attacked at that point. (9:177-98; 8:129) The remainder of Beauregard's brigades were spread from Stone Bridge for seven miles east along Bull Run. (11:135) The extended defensive front made communications difficult, mainly because Beauregard had an inexperienced staff and no division structure. (1:21) On the day McDowell left Washington the Confederates at Manassas were outnumbered,

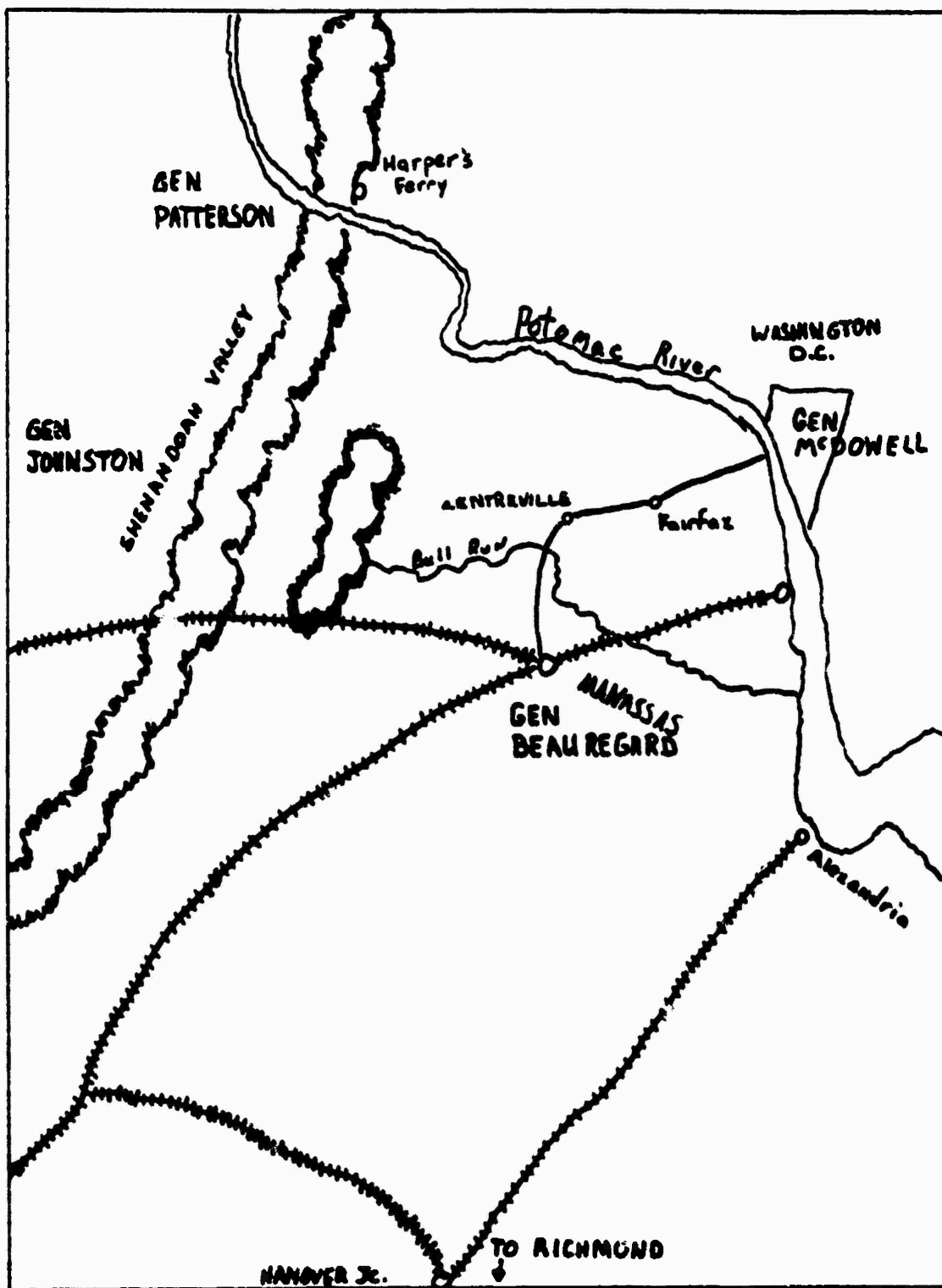


Figure 1. Theatre of Operations (8:12-3; 5:47-76)

concentrated for a frontal attack, and vulnerable to a Union flanking maneuver.

The Confederates gained critical time to correct some of their vulnerabilities when McDowell encountered delays implementing his strategy. McDowell's inexperienced troops, lack of adequate intelligence information, and false assumptions caused him to revise his plan. First, McDowell's deployment plan proved formidable. His inexperienced and undisciplined troops were slow, preventing a planned surprise of Confederate advance pickets at Fairfax, Virginia on the 17th. (5:100) The Union army finally reached Centreville, near Bull Run, on the 18th but had squandered three days rations and were starving even though adequate supplies were available. With the troops fed he could have attacked on the 19th, but was further delayed when he discovered a flaw in his plan. (8:138-39) Investigating the country to the left, where he had hoped to make his flanking maneuver, McDowell found it too rugged and was forced to replan the attack. (9:178-79)

Lack of adequate intelligence information and false assumptions continued to cause McDowell delays. He had assumed there were 35,000 Confederates at Manassas; however there were really only 21,000 by the 18th. (5:73; 1:23) This assumption may have been reinforced when one of his division commanders, General Tyler, violated a direct order not to engage the enemy, and was beaten by a small well-hidden Confederate force. (1:22-23) Based on this false assumption of Confederate troop

strength, McDowell discounted a frontal attack option. (9:179) He spent the next two days studying the country to the right and revising his plan for a flanking maneuver in that direction. (9:180) On the 19th and 20th General Tyler reported heavy railroad traffic on the Confederate side and his assumption that it was Johnston's army. This time the information was accurate, but McDowell ignored it. (1:27) McDowell, while reconnoitering to the right, required his scouts avoid all enemy pickets. Because of this constraint the scouts discovered a route, but they did not discover its difficulty. Therefore, McDowell had inadequate intelligence when he chose to cross Bull Run at Sudley Ford. (8:141-143)

The Union delay allowed the Confederates time to reinforce Beauregard's army. General Beauregard had realized his forces were insufficient for the task of defending Manassas. He received intelligence information in early July of the Union Army's size and departure date from Washington and appealed to the Confederate leadership in Richmond to send reinforcements including General Johnston's army in the Shenandoah Valley. (9:197; 5:xii) They did not make the decision to do so until the 16th when the Union forces left Washington, making McDowell's delays on the 19th and 20th of July critical. (9:20) The Confederate leadership ordered approximately 3,000 troops deployed at Alexandria, Virginia to reinforce Beauregard, and the troops arrived at Manassas on the 19th. They also sent 2000 troops from Richmond and they arrived on the 18th and the 21st.

(9:175) Directions to join Johnston's and Beauregard's armies were less decisive. The orders received by Johnston on the 17th gave him "discretion" to support Beauregard, if able. (9:200) Johnston didn't react immediately, but when he did he was very effective. Starting on the 18th, the day Beauregard expected the Union attack, Johnston cleverly used his cavalry to conceal the withdrawal of 8,000 troops from the Shenandoah Valley and Union General Patterson didn't discover their absence until the 20th. (9:230; 5:111) Johnston used the strategic railroad to Manassas and the majority of his forces arrived on the 19th and 20th with some arriving on the day of the battle. (9:175; 2:151) The Confederates had used the two day delay to substantially reinforce General Beauregard.

Although McDowell's delay had altered the troop strength, Union and Confederate plans were still consistent with their original basic strategies. (See Figure 2) McDowell still planned a flanking maneuver, but to the right instead of the left. He intended to send a division under Tyler down Warrenton Pike to Stone Bridge to wait in readiness, while two divisions, totaling 13,000 troops, were to follow Tyler and then start the right flanking maneuver to cross Bull Run at Sudley Ford.

(11:139) Once on the other side, it was critical that this major force proceed along Bull Run to Stone Bridge, join with Tyler's division, and outflank the Confederates in mass. (8:186-87) McDowell also planned to leave 9,000 troops to protect the rear areas. (7:4) General Beauregard's forces had increased as a

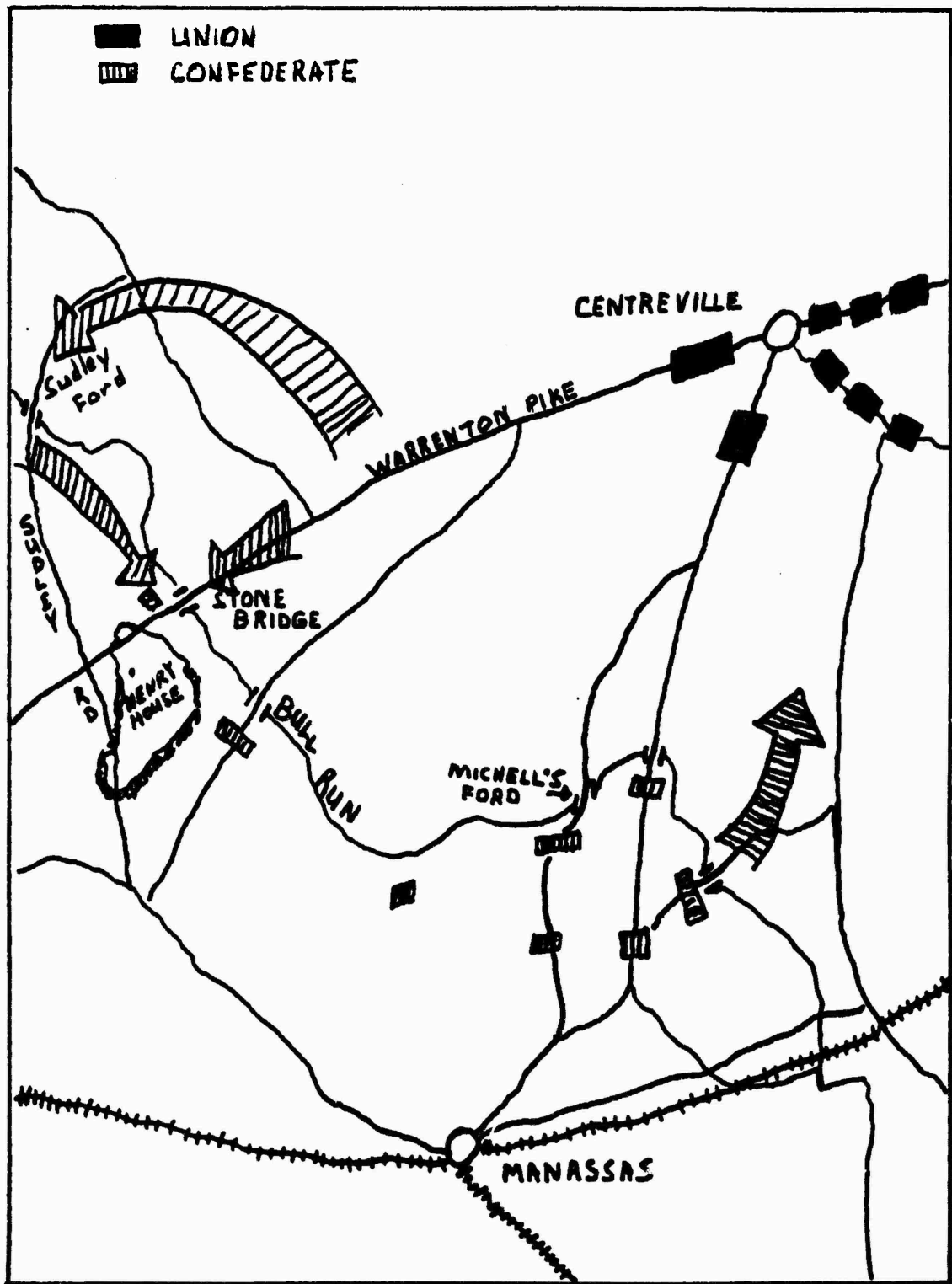


Figure 2. Pre-Battle Positions (8:136-37; 11:139-42; 8:186-87)

result of the delay, but he still assumed he would be attacked at his strongest point at Mitchell's Ford. He maintained his strategy of interior lines, but added a flanking maneuver of his own on the opposite side the Union had planned. (11:142)

The "Pre-Battle" phase was significant. Confederate strength was growing to the number McDowell had originally expected. This change had occurred as a result of McDowell's delays and General Patterson's failure to contain the Confederate army in the Shenandoah Valley. However, the strategies of the opposing Generals for the battle had basically remained the same.

McDOWELL'S SUCCESS

On the 21st, McDowell attacked and achieved a victory in the first encounter. However, his complex plan, coupled with poor command and control and tactics, caused him to lose many advantages of the surprise flanking maneuver. He had problems just getting to the battlefield. McDowell ordered his army ready to march at 0200 hours on 21 July. Their goal was to start the turning maneuver at Sudley Ford at 0600. (8:165) They were late for several reasons. First, the two divisions of 13,000 men had camped east of the small town of Centreville. Confusion resulted when they all arrived in Centreville at the same time, and they lost several hours as commanders aligned the divisions and brigades in the planned order of march through the city. (11:140) Once on the move, the second problem occurred. The restricted reconnaissance on the 19th and 20th had failed to reveal the inadequacy of the road to Sudley or the most direct

route. The road was tortuous, and the inexperienced soldiers made slow progress. In addition, when confronted with a fork in the road, the guide recommended the wrong turn, adding four additional miles to the already planned eight mile march.

(8:184; 5:168) As a result of these problems, it was 0930, not 0600, when the first brigade crossed at Sudley Ford. (11:141)

Despite these delays, McDowell achieved partial surprise because the Confederate leaders were convinced they would be attacked on their front. General Beauregard received information of the Union movements at Centreville at 0430 and implemented his own plans. He gave orders to start the Confederate flanking maneuver, and also ordered two of Johnston's recently arrived brigades to the left, directing them to respond to the point of fire if fighting erupted. (2:112-18) Beauregard still thought the Union would attack his strongest position at Mitchell's Ford, and along with Johnston, proceeded there to wait for his own surprise flanking maneuver to materialize. (9:170-79) What actually happened was a warning at 0830 from observers that dust indicated heavy Union troop movement to the far left near Sudley. (10:38) General Beauregard did not consider this troop movement to be the major Union attack, and he continued to wait for the fighting to unfold on his front. (8:177-78) Fortunately for the Confederates, General Evans, with only a demi-brigade at Stone Bridge, had also received the warning of the Union troop movement. Evans, unlike Beauregard, perceived the threat of a Union flanking maneuver. His demi-brigade had been under

harassment fire all morning, but Evans had concealed the size of his force. When the warning came, he boldly reduced his already small brigade at Stone Bridge and secretly moved eight of his eleven companies to meet the Union troops approaching Sudley. Again he took up a concealed defensive position to the right of Sudley Spring road. His goal was to prevent the Union forces from moving down Bull Run and joining forces at Stone Bridge. (8:196; 9:185) Evans achieved his desired results. (See Figure 3) McDowell wasn't at the front when his lead brigade crossed at Sudley Ford, did not wait for the remainder of the division and started marching down Sudley Spring Road instead of turning toward Bull Run. When General Evans' small force fired on that first brigade and pinned them down, successive Union brigades also deployed along the road instead of turning toward Bull Run. Confederate forces heard the fire and moved to support Evans. (9:185-206; 11:144) In summary, McDowell had achieved partial surprise, but his plan was beginning to unravel.

McDowell finally arrived on the scene at 1030 and saw that things were going poorly for his surprise flanking maneuver. He took several actions which further showed the weakness of his command and control. To unite all of his forces, McDowell ordered Tyler to press the attack from Stone Bridge. The orders were acknowledged but misinterpreted as Tyler only provided periodic artillery fire. McDowell didn't follow up the orders because he had taken direct command of the troops in front of him and he was orchestrating an advance. Because of this detailed

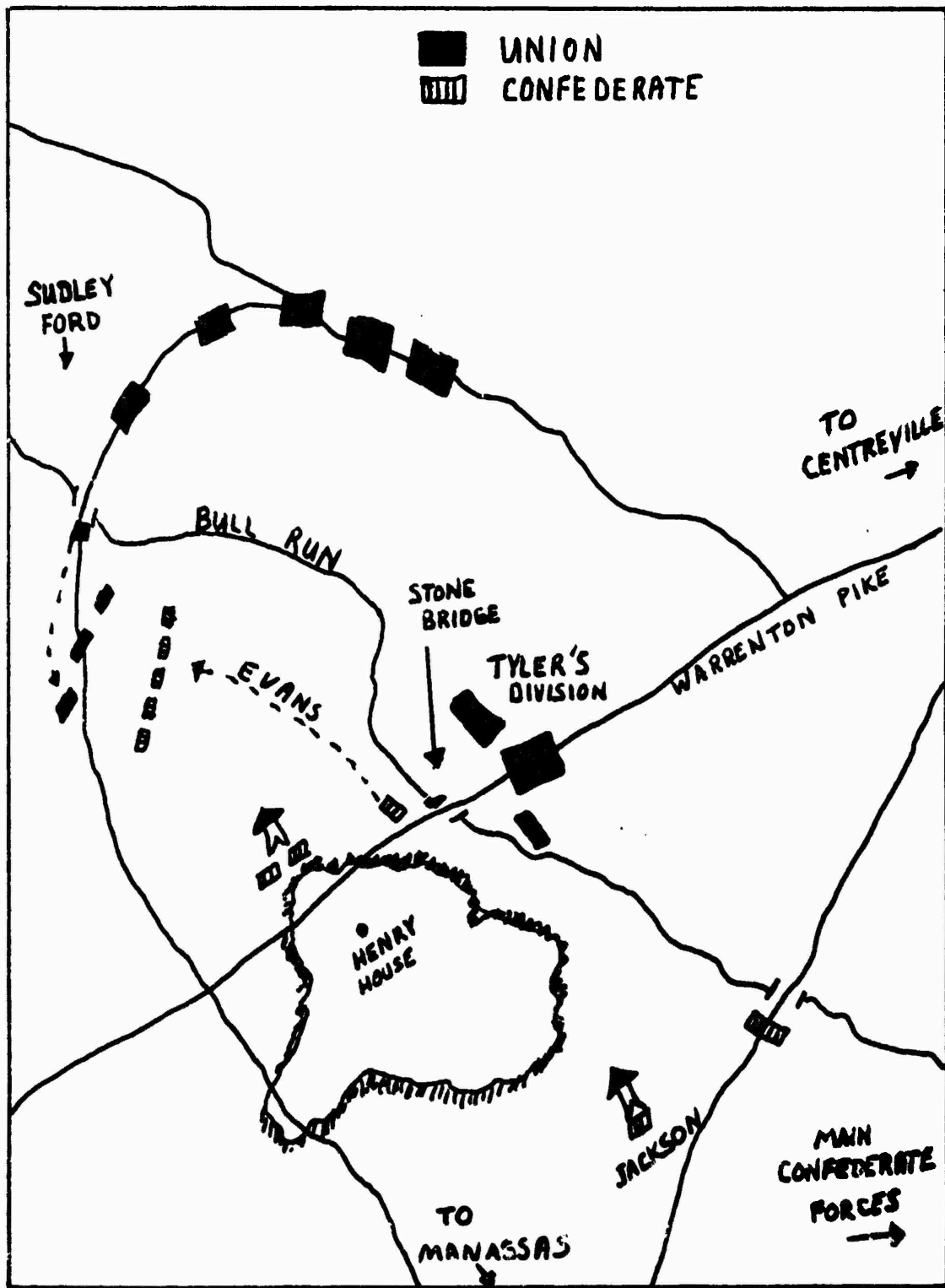


Figure 3. Union Flanking Maneuver (8:182-83)

involvement, McDowell spent the rest of the day commanding not an army but only "the troops under his observation." (9:187)

However, the combination of McDowell's advance and the independent attack by one of Tyler's brigades caused the smaller Confederate force to break and retreat in confusion. (8:193; 11:144)

McDowell had been successful in the first encounter, but it had been an expensive victory. Because of his complex plan and problems implementing it, his troops had already been up over 12 hours; they were tired; and they had not yet encountered the main Confederate force. Although he had achieved surprise, it was only partially effective because a small force took advantage of the Union's piecemeal deployment. The Confederates had turned the Union forces away from their objective, and delayed them another two hours. Possibly most important, McDowell was now commanding troops and was unable to effectively bring Tyler's full division into the fight. It was Tyler "...he had relied upon for the decisive fighting of the day." (3:457-58; 9:187) Despite these problems, many of the inexperienced Union troops thought the battle had been won. (8:195)

STALEMATE AT HENRY HOUSE HILL

The euphoria of the Union troops was not matched by the Confederates, and Beauregard's defensive strategy was now upset. However, once again the individual leadership of a Confederate officer would be a critical factor in stopping the Union advance. Beauregard and Johnston had waited all morning for their own

offensive to start. It never did because of confusion over orders. (11:142) Finally it became obvious to Beauregard that the main Union attack was not to be at his strongest position, but the main attack was on his left toward Sudley Ford. It wasn't until 1230 that he and Johnston arrived to take charge of the real battle. What they found was General Jackson, one of Johnston's brigade commanders, had taken the initiative, reacted to firing on the left, and made an excellent tactical decision. Jackson had established a strategic defensive position on the east and south part of the plateau of Henry House Hill along an irregular line of trees. (See Figure 4) Courageously he had inspired his own brigade to stand, and the confused and retreating Confederates from Sudley Ford, rallied around Jackson who was "...standing like a stone wall." (8:201; 9:190; 6:7) Seeing this, Beauregard and Johnston moved to the front also, and at great personal risk, helped inspire other retreating troops to form a defensive line. (8:204; 11:145-46; 9:210)

Even after rallying these soldiers, Beauregard and Johnston were in a tenuous position. Although the Union troops faced heavily wooded approaches to Henry House Hill, McDowell still had over 9,000 troops in front of him, and Beauregard had 6,500. In addition, the Union rifled artillery was under seasoned officers and was accurate at long range, unlike the Confederate smooth bores. (11:147-49; 9:188-89) With the situation looking bad for the Confederates, Johnston agreed to go to the rear and channel reinforcements to Henry House Hill. (1:187)

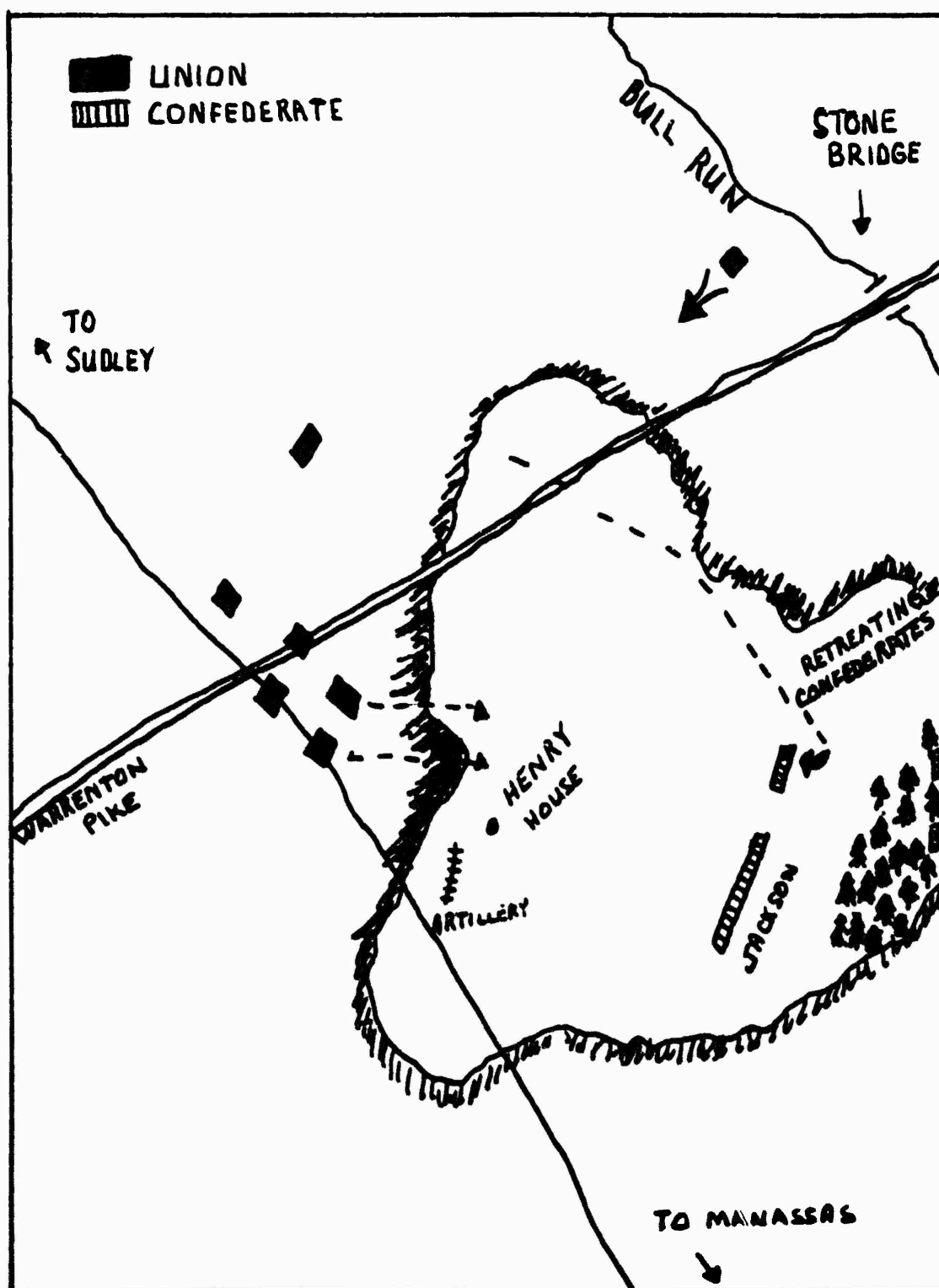


Figure 4. Stalemate at Henry House Hill (8:198-99)

General McDowell, realizing these advantages and others, resumed the attack, but once again Union tactics, and command and control were a problem. "McDowell ordered a general advance" to maintain the momentum of his earlier victory. He also ordered his artillery repositioned, but failed to monitor its placement. Initially his decisions worked, as the Union troops established a strong position on the plateau along with the artillery.

(11:149-50) The positioning of the artillery on the plateau was a critical error. Because of confusion over McDowell's orders, the artillery was placed not only on the plateau, where it was no longer superior to the Confederate artillery, but also in a vulnerable location with inadequate protection. Additional troops for defense were on their way when a Confederate commander boldly marched his soldiers out of the woods near the artillery. Mistaken for Union troops, the Confederates moved close enough to fire a deadly volley and captured the critical artillery. (8:212; 11:150; 1:39-40) After the Union lost the advantage of their artillery, Jackson lead a Confederate advance which swept the Union forces from the plateau. (8:223-24)

McDowell's employment tactics and loss of overall command were also resulting in attrition warfare he couldn't sustain. The ebb and flow of the battle continued until 1600 and was indecisive as McDowell ordered an attack and gained a position on the plateau but "...he couldn't stay on the crest with no artillery and weakening forces." (8:224) Yet he persisted in direct attack rather than maneuver and employed his brigades a

regiment at a time. When he did gain an advantage, the Confederates would retreat into the woods, regroup, and attack. (11:151) During this ebb and flow, General Johnston was sending Confederate reinforcements. However, on the Union side McDowell was caught up in the battle and it was a company grade officer who saw the Union's plight and went for reinforcements. (9:190) McDowell had lost many of his advantages during this second encounter and a stalemate had resulted.

THE BATTLE TURNS

The stalemate broke very rapidly, and the battle ended because of the combined efforts of two generals coordinating the Confederate effort and the arrival of fresh troops from the Shenandoah Valley. McDowell almost achieved victory before the battle turned into a rout. (7:5) With a small force arriving from Sudley Ford, he again recaptured his artillery and also a position on the plateau. However, the artillery proved useless without cannoneers or horses to move it. Beauregard, who was orchestrating the battle on the plateau, was just barely holding on to his defensive position. McDowell's delays earlier now became critical. Fresh troops arrived from the Shenandoah Valley, and Johnston combined these troops with some of Beauregard's men from the right. He sent them to attack McDowell's right flank. (See Figure 5) The attack was decisive. McDowell's weakened forces were tired and could not withstand the flank attack by fresh troops and also a frontal attack by Beauregard. (11:152; 9:190-91) The Union soldiers broke ranks, started their retreat,

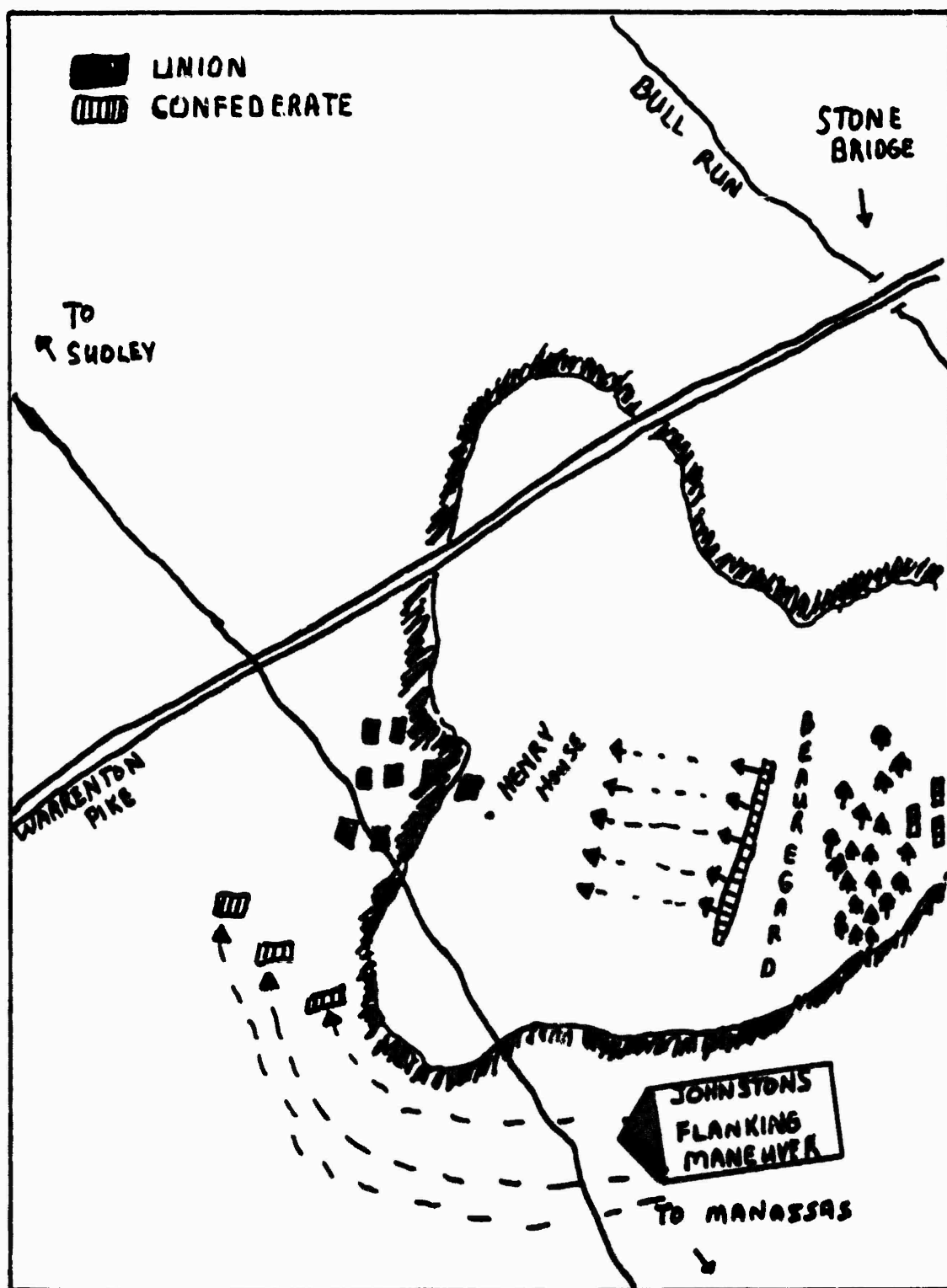


Figure 5. Confederate Decisive Attack (8:198-99)

and all cohesion was lost. (6:9) Panic set in when they were fired upon east of Bull Run, and McDowell was unable to rally his troops.

SUMMARY

In summary, the general outcome of the battle was a victory for the Confederates. This was a small battle by Civil War standards, less than a thousand men killed, but the results were significant. The North was forced to take the war seriously and called up 500,000 men the next day for a three year enlistment. For the South, the easy victory prevented more serious preparations. (6:12) The question for the student of military history is why did this outcome occur. Both sides had opportunities for victory, and both effectively and ineffectively applied the principles of war. Why did one prevail?

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the course of reading and rereading the many books researched on this battle, I have attempted to assure that sources are completely credited. The one thing that became apparent early in the research was that equally credible sources such as eye witnesses and participants had differing accounts as to times, locations, size of forces and even sequence of events. Because of this, I have stated forces in general terms, and have used times and sequence of events as they appeared most frequently in the sources reviewed. I don't believe this synthesis of "facts" distorts the usefulness of the presentation for an analysis against the principles of war.

Section Two

BULL RUN/PRINCIPLES OF WAR AN ANALYSIS

"The great principles of war are truths, and the same today as in the time of Caesar or Napoleon," This quote is from General G. T. Beauregard, C.S.A., as he wrote about the First Battle of Bull Run. (9:223) Beauregard won the first Battle of Bull Run and the Union lost. Why? Could it be that the violation of some of these "timeless truths" was the cause?

The purpose of this section is to analyze the Battle of Bull Run and to show how the Union and Confederates both effectively and ineffectively applied the principles of war. To do so a principle will be described followed by an analysis of how the Union and then the Confederates applied that principle. The principles are from a draft copy of the proposed new Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1. For the sake of brevity only portions are quoted directly, and the balance of the definition is paraphrased.

OBJECTIVE

"The most basic principle for success in any military operation is a clear and concise statement of a realistic objective. The objective defines what the military action intends to accomplish and normally describes the nature and scope of an operation." "The ultimate military objective of war is to neutralize or destroy the enemy's armed forces

and his will to fight." However objectives may differ from operation to operation and for specific attacks, as long as they contribute to the overall political objective. Commanders must develop their broad military strategy considering the primary objective, the use of the other principles of war, and in the context of friendly and enemy capabilities. They must clearly and concisely communicate the objective so that subordinates can take appropriate actions that support the overall objective and understand how their contribution is part of the greater goal.

Union

The Union's military objective of capturing Manassas Junction was clear and supported the national objective. The political pressure to use the "three months men" was translated into a clear military objective of capturing the strategic railhead at Manassas and forcing the Confederates away from Washington. (9:176; 11:126-27) This military objective supported the Union's national objective to reunite the states by defeating the Confederate army at Manassas and establishing a foothold in the border state of Virginia.

Confederates

The Confederate military objective of defending Manassas was initially unrealistic but became achievable because of the Union General McDowell's delays. The clear military objective of defending Manassas was consistent with the Confederate national objective to remain independent and defend the Confederate State of Virginia from Union aggression. (6:Foreword-1) However, Beauregard's army at Manassas was outnumbered over two-to-one when the Union started its deployment toward Bull Run.

(9:197-203) Without Johnston, Beauregard would have lost, and without McDowell's delays, Johnston could not have reached Manassas making the defensive objective attainable. (6:11)

OFFENSE

"Unless offensive action is initiated, military victory is seldom possible. The principle of offense is to act rather than react. The offensive enables commanders to select priorities of attack, as well as the time, place, and weaponry necessary to achieve objectives."

Union

The use of the principle of offense by the Union at Bull Run was a fallout from the conflicting national objectives. If the Union was to achieve its national objective of reuniting the states against an adversary, wishing only to be left alone, an offensive action was required. As such, the offensive advantages fell to the Union with McDowell setting the time and the place and having the option of causing the Confederates to react. Offense, like all the principles, must be considered in combination with other principles when determining effectiveness. For example, McDowell in a broad sense ineffectively used offense because he delayed his attack and allowed the Confederates time to join their armies and defeat him (timing). (9:182) Considering only the first engagement, he effectively combined offense with maneuver and upset the Confederate defensive strategy of interior lines, causing them to react all day to an unexpected field of battle. During the second phase of the battle, McDowell took the offensive by ordering a general

advance. This offensive was ineffective because he didn't coordinate the attack, and his numerically superior force was not employed as a cohesive mass (11:149; 5:226) Therefore, McDowell both effectively and ineffectively used offense during the phases of the battle.

Confederates

The Confederates were victorious by effectively using offense after a false start at the beginning of the battle. Beauregard's primary strategy was defensive, but he had planned a flanking maneuver in his battle strategy to throw the attacking Union off balance and cut their lines of communication. However, the orders were confusing, and the offensive never started. (11:142) As such, Beauregard spent most of the day reacting to the Union initiatives, and the battle finally settled into a stalemate at Henry House Hill with neither army having a decisive advantage. The decisive advantage was the offensive organized by Johnston late in the afternoon. He sent a Confederate force against the Union flank at Henry House and the Union army was too tired and weak to effectively counter this attack from another direction. Using offense the Confederates finally achieved victory. (11:152)

SURPRISE

"Surprise is the attack of an enemy at a time, place, and manner for which the enemy is neither prepared nor expecting an attack. The principle of surprise is achieved when an enemy is unable to react effectively to an attack." Surprise can upset the balance of power, allow seizing of the

offensive, and disrupt his cohesion. Surprise, to be successful, must be a bold, timely, and a well coordinated action which exploits an enemy's weakness, and it must be implemented under tight security using deception to prevent the enemy knowledge or time to counter the action."

Union

McDowell achieved surprise, but the effects were only partial because of his poor tactics. McDowell failed to surprise Confederate advance pickets on the 17th because his troops were slow to deploy. (5:102) On the 19th and 20th, he effectively concealed his plan to outflank the Confederates while gathering intelligence. As such, General Beauregard still believed, on the morning of the 21st that he would be attacked on his front despite, a warning of Union troop movement near Sudley Ford. Fortunately for the Confederates, General Evans took the warning seriously and moved to meet the Union forces. (11:142) The Union lost the full potential of the surprise when they deployed by regiment, allowing the small Confederate force to pin them down as they marched down Sudley Spring Road. (9:185) By not massing and overpowering the Confederates under Evans they were delayed, thus allowing Beauregard time to react to the real field of battle for the day, his left flank.

Confederates

The Confederates effectively surprised McDowell by taking the offensive at the end of the day. During the stalemate at Henry House Hill, McDowell was focused on the battle for the plateau and did not expect an attack on his flank. As a result,

the Confederate attack destroyed the cohesion of his troops, and he was forced to retreat.

SECURITY

"Security protects friendly military operation from enemy activities which could hamper or defeat" . . . "forces." "Security is taking continuous, positive measures to prevent surprise and preserve freedom of action." "Security involves active and passive defensive measures" to deny the enemy information on your capabilities, location, strength, and intentions. Examples of the factors to be considered are "secrecy, disguise, operational security, deception, dispersal, maneuver, timing, posturing, and the defense and hardening of forces." Effective C³I makes this possible.

Union

McDowell effectively used security to conceal his strategy, but over-concern for security caused him problems implementing that strategy. First, he would not allow his reconnaissance forces to engage Confederate pickets while looking for a route to maneuver to the right. As discussed, the Union's intentions were concealed, but this constraint turned to a disadvantage when his scouts failed to discover passable fords closer than Sudley Ford, the most direct route to Sudley, and the difficulty of the route chosen. (8:142) As a result, McDowell lost several hours, and his troops had to march an additional four miles because of incomplete reconnaissance. Secondly, McDowell may have overdone security by leaving over 6,000 troops to guard Centreville and at least another 3,000 to guard his flanks during the battle. (7:6) As such, 25 percent of his forces did not participate in the battle. In the interest of security, McDowell concealed his strategy but lost time and the use of his full army.

Confederates

Beauregard's defensive strategy also overemphasized security, but individual commanders used it effectively. Beauregard concentrated and concealed his forces at the most direct route to Manassas relying on a strategy of interior lines. (8:129-35; 9:198) This strategy did not give him freedom of action when coupled with his poor staff organization. (1:21) The effective use of security by General Evans and General Jackson gave Beauregard additional time to overcome this deficiency. Evans effectively used an observer's warning, concealed the size of his forces at Stone Bridge, and moved part of those forces undetected to Sudley Ford, delaying Union flanking maneuver. (5:165; 7:30-31). General Jackson also effectively used security by taking up a strong defensive position which allowed the inexperienced Confederate troops to be in a more defensible position, permitting them to conceal the size of their force during the subsequent struggles for Henry House Hill. (5:206-07). The most effective use of security was Johnston's movement of 8,000 troops out of the Shenandoah Valley. Johnston used his calvary to deceive Union General Patterson into thinking the Confederate army was still in the Shenandoah Valley. (6:5) When Patterson discovered the deception on July 20th, it was too late to help McDowell at Manassas. (9:230)

MASS AND ECONOMY OF FORCE

"Concentrated firepower can overwhelm enemy defenses and secure an objective at the right time and place." Concentrating enormous strike power at selected targets can "break the enemy's defenses, disrupt his plan of attack, destroy the cohesion of his forces, produce the psychological shock that may thwart a critical enemy thrust, or create an opportunity for friendly forces to seize the offensive. Economy of force "permits a commander to execute attacks with appropriate mass at the critical time and place without wasting resources on secondary objectives." A commander must balance priorities and not expend a disproportionate amount of his assets on secondary objectives dissipating them for use to achieve primary objectives.

Union

The Union failed in their attempt to outflank and defeat the Confederates because "their forces were not handled with concert of masses." (9:218) This quote from Confederate General Beauregard best reflects the Union use of mass and economy of force. The Union's flanking maneuver was based on the untested assumption of an equivalent size Confederate army at Bull Run. McDowell's delays allowed this assumption to become a fact, and the use of maneuver provided him with effective economy of force. (7:6) However, his commanders did not mass their troops after crossing Bull Run at Sudley and were pinned down by a much smaller Confederate force. Also during the stalemate at Henry House Hill, McDowell did not mass his forces or coordinate his attacks and lost the momentum of the battle. Once again he used the tactic of attacking the enemy by regiment and gave up the advantage of his superior numbers. (11:142-45) By not using

mass when appropriate, McDowell lost many of the advantages he had gained with the surprise offensive on the Confederate flank.

Confederates

Until the final attack on the Union flank the Confederates did not use mass or economy of force in an offensive sense. The flank attack was an effective use of economy of force because it provided a precision attack at a time and place the Union least expected it.

MANEUVER

"Maneuver is the movement of friendly forces in relation to enemy forces. Commanders seek to maneuver their strengths selectively against an enemy's weakness while avoiding engagements with forces of superior strength." Maneuver can result in gaining the initiative through surprise, but "may lead to loss of cohesion and control."

Union

McDowell's use of maneuver was only partially effective. As already discussed, the flanking maneuver gained the Union surprise and allowed them to set the field of battle. However, McDowell lacked sufficient information on the route, and his troops were delayed and fatigued during the circuitous march. As has been discussed, a small Confederate force delayed him further by taking advantage of inadequate Union tactics. (8:226) As a result, McDowell was unable to implement his strategy of reuniting his flanking divisions from Sudley Road with Tyler's division at Stone Bridge for a mass Union attack on the Confederate main force. (5:186-87)

Confederates

Beauregard was in a reactive mode all day and did not use maneuver until the effective flanking attack that ended the battle.

TIMING AND TEMPO

"Timing and tempo is the principle of executing military operations at a point in time and at a rate which optimizes the use of friendly forces and which inhibits or denies the effectiveness of enemy forces." This ... "may require a mix of surprise, security, mass, and maneuver..." Effective C I is needed by commanders to recognize and take advantage of opportunities.

Union

McDowell lost the advantage of timing by delaying the start of the battle and could not maintain the tempo once it began. The two day delay in starting the battle allowed the Confederates an opportunity to join their armies at Manassas. During the first engagement, McDowell had the smaller Confederate force on the run from Sudley Ford, but his command and control was unable to bring Tyler's division into the battle. (9:187) Finally, at Henry House Hill his continued ineffective attacks further slowed the tempo allowing the Confederates time to organize their own offensive. (8:220-24)

Confederates

As already discussed, the Confederate actions by General Evans and Jackson helped slow the Union tempo. However, for the

majority of the battle the Confederates reacted to the timing and tempo set by the Union.

UNITY OF COMMAND

"Unity of command is the principle of vesting appropriate authority and responsibility in a single commander to effect unity of effort in carrying out an assigned task." As such it "provides for effective exercise of leadership," and "the coordinated action of all forces toward a common goal." Unity of command also requires effective C.I.

Union

McDowell had singular authority for the battle but did not effectively exercise control. During the first engagement, McDowell began commanding the troops ". . . under his own observation." (9:187) As a result there were many times he was not controlling the total army effort. For example, a whole division arrived at Sudley Ford and could not find McDowell's headquarters or anyone in command. (8:270-72) McDowell did not position himself to monitor whether his orders to Tyler or the artillery commander were followed. Finally, McDowell got so involved in commanding, not controlling, during the stalemate at Henry House Hill that a company grade officer went for reinforcements on his own initiative. (9:190) McDowell's loss of control contributed to his defeat because he didn't bring all available forces into the battle. (7:37)

Confederates

Neither commander was designated in command, but their combined efforts proved effective. Johnston was senior to

Beauregard, but actions indicate Beauregard was in charge.

(2:2-3) Beauregard issued the orders on the morning of the attack and commanded the Confederates at Henry House Hill while Johnston went to the rear to direct reinforcements. (9:187) The cooperative efforts of both Generals proved beneficial. While Beauregard fought the battle on an unexpected front, Johnston simultaneously organized and redeployed the inexperienced forces from their old positions and also the troops arriving from the Shenandoah Valley. (9:187)

SIMPLICITY

"To achieve a unity of effort toward a common goal, guidance must be quick, clear, and concise - it must have simplicity. Simplicity promotes understanding, reduces confusion, and permits ease of execution in the intense and uncertain environment of combat."
"Simplicity adds to cohesion" and should be reflected in command structure, strategies, plans, tactics, and procedures.

Union

The Union strategy was too complicated. McDowell's plan to split his army, maneuver, and rejoin his forces exceeded the capabilities of the Union commanders and troops. (11:128-39) Unforeseen problems, unexpected enemy actions, and the fog of battle, exceeded the ability of the Union army to effectively implement the strategy starting with the initial engagement at Sudley Ford.

Confederates

Simplicity was not a factor for the Confederates because McDowell's attack upset their strategy, and they spent the entire battle reacting to him.

LOGISTICS

"Logistics is the principle of sustaining both man and machine in combat. Logistics is the principle of obtaining, moving, and maintaining warfighting potential." It must be a "simple, secure, and flexible system..." "Logistics can limit the extent of an operation or permit the attainment of objectives."

Union

Logistics played a critical yet indirect role in the Union effort at Bull Run. McDowell's delay on the 18th to feed the troops was more a result of lack of discipline by the troops and their commanders than a failure of the logistics system. The troops had squandered three days rations in two days, and when they arrived near Centreville, food was available but not distributed. (8:138-39) The critical, but indirect impact was that McDowell got an opportunity to discover that the terrain to his left would not support his originally planned flanking maneuver. (9:178; 8:137-39) Had he not discovered this deficiency he would have probably attacked the Confederates sooner, when their total force was smaller, but on their right flank, where the Confederates had more troops deployed. The possible outcome is conjecture, but the Confederates would not have had both armies on the field. (7:5)

Confederates

The effective use of logistics by the Confederates was the key to their victory. The very objective of the battle to control the railhead leading to the Shenandoah was validated by the Confederate's logistical use of the railroad. Even before the leaders in Richmond decided to reunite the armies, Beauregard had prepared engines and railcars to move Johnston's troops to Manassas. (8:151-52) Once the decision was made, the logistics network was ready, allowing Johnston's troops to play a decisive role in the battle.

COHESION

"Cohesion is the principle of establishing and maintaining the warfighting spirit and capability of a force to win." Cohesion depends directly on the spirit a leader inspires in his people, the shared experiences of a force in training or combat, and the sustained operational capability of a force.
"Leaders maintain cohesion by communicating objectives clearly, demonstrating genuine concern for the morale and welfare of their people, and employing men and machines according to the dictates of sound military doctrine."

Union

The Union troops were confident when they departed Washington, but there were several failures in leadership which must have undermined their confidence. (5:92) For example, during the deployment the troops ran out of food, and on the same day, Tyler was driven back from Bull Run when he disregarded orders and engaged the enemy. I believe the fact that two units marched home on the day of the battle demonstrates that the state

brigades were losing confidence in the senior Union military leaders. (12:8-9) On the day of the battle the debacle of 13,000 troops converging on Centreville at the same time certainly did not inspire cohesion through confidence in leadership. (11:139-40) Finally, the troops must have doubted their leaders' military judgement as the men were deployed by regiment at Henry House Hill while the troops from the preceding regiment were retreating through the ranks. (5:217) These actions could not have suggested effective cohesion.

Confederates

The Confederates had more effective cohesion as a result of the inspirational acts of their leaders. Jackson inspired not only his own men. but also the retreating troops at Sudley. (5:201-02) Johnston rallied the retreating 4th Alabama brigade by taking their unit flag and, at personal risk, repositioned them near Jackson's defensive line. Beauregard rallied the 8th Georgia regiment. (5:198-99) Finally, the defensive tactic of using the tree lines for cover aided the Confederates' cohesion by providing a relatively safe place for the forces to regroup. (11:136-52)

SUMMARY

Why did the Confederates win at Bull Run? The analysis above has shown how each side effectively and ineffectively applied the principles of war. The Committee on the Conduct of the War blamed Patterson. (7:6) McDowell had an opportunity to win

despite Patterson's failure . Beauregard and Johnston could have lost because of some ineffective applications of the principles. Answering the question why the Confederates won using Beauregard's "timeless truths", the principles of war, is not an empirical effort. Each reader can now answer the question himself by looking at the effective and ineffective use of the principles individually and in concert to determine why he thinks the Confederates prevailed.

SECTION THREE
SEMINAR CHAIRPERSON GUIDANCE

FIRST BATTLE OF BULL RUN - 1861

XX-XX-XX

(Seminar Chairperson Guidance)

Course Officer Led

OBJECTIVE

Comprehend the principles of war by reviewing how they were effectively and ineffectively used during the Battle of Bull Run - 1861.

After this unit of instruction you should be able to:

1. Understand the principles of war, their interdependence, and their use as guidelines.
2. Give examples of effective and ineffective use of the principles of war by Union and Confederate leaders during the Battle of Bull Run.
3. Describe how the outcome of the Battle of Bull Run was influenced by the principles of war.

SEMINAR TOPIC: Analysis of the Battle of Bull Run using the Principles of War (POW)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

During this period you should encourage a critical analysis of the Battle of Bull Run by integrating assigned readings and lectures on the principles of war. All Course Officers will have a copy of the battle description. In addition you have a section analyzing the battle and showing the effective and ineffective use of each principle by the Union and Confederate leaders. You also have a list of suggested questions which can be used to encourage discussion. If you develop your own questions you should consider asking how a selected principle was applied during the battle, or another approach would be take one of the four phases in the battle description and ask what principles were applied effectively and ineffectively. Finally, "what if questions" could be used to allow the course officers to role play and state what principles they would have used if they had been a Union or Confederate General at Bull Run.

OVERVIEW/AGENDA

Use the following agenda: 0000-0000 - Introduce Seminar

0000-0000 - Discussion

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Union General Patterson was blamed for the loss at Bull Run because he allowed the Confederate armies to unite. How could the Union still have won?
 - The Union could have potentially won.
 - They delayed on the 18th to feed the troops - uncoordinated logistics.
 - They could have attacked on the 19th and 20th but were replanning - inadequate intelligence
 - The plan they implemented was not based on adequate intelligence
 - They didn't know the Confederate strength and location
2. What POWs did the Confederates use during the Union delay?
 - Security - General Johnston used the calvary to effectively conceal his movement out of the Shenandoah.
 - Logistics - The Confederates used the railway to help move men and artillery 57 miles in the same or less time than it had taken McDowell to cover the 30 miles from Washington.
 - Timing and Tempo - Johnston's forces arriving from the Shenandoah played an important part in the critical flanking maneuver which won the battle. This POW was probably more a result of luck than prior planning but was made possible by security and logistics.
3. Union General McDowell used maneuver to outflank and surprise the Confederates. Were these principles used effectively or ineffectively and what POWs did he ignore preventing him from uniting his forces at Stone Bridge?
 - Despite problems, maneuver and surprise were effective as the Confederates spent the rest of the day reacting to the unexpected flanking maneuver.
 - McDowell's maneuver was delayed during deployment because of poor intelligence and difficulty on the route.

- The maneuver was discovered by Confederate observers but not recognized as a major attack. Only a small Confederate force unilaterally reacted.
- Union did not achieve objective because they ignored mass and unity of command
 - The Union did not use mass and a small Confederate force turned the Union front as they deployed by regiment.
 - Unity of command was ineffective
 - There was no single commander when Union crossed at Sudley
 - McDowell's orders to forces at Stone Bridge to attack were unclear and not followed up when Tyler failed to attack
 - McDowell got directly involved in commanding a unit and not commanding his army.
- 4. The Confederates with a smaller force prevented the Union from winning at Henry House Hill. What POW's did the Confederates use effectively and what could McDowell have done?
 - Security and economy of force were used by Confederates
 - They used the tree line to take up a defensive position and conceal the size of their forces at Henry House.
 - They made attacks to prevent the Union from maintaining a foothold on the plateau, and used the tree line to fall back and regroup when necessary.
 - During Confederate retreat from Sudley cohesion was gained by Stonewall Jackson's stand and the acts of bravery by Generals Beauregard and Johnston
 - Mass and cohesion, if considered by McDowell, could have countered the Confederate hold on Henry House
 - He attacked the hill by regiment and did not take advantage of overwhelming the inferior Confederate force before they were reinforced.
 - His artillery had longer range and was to be a cohesive force for his men but he allowed it to be moved to a position where the range advantage was lost and it became vulnerable. It's loss had an opposite affect on cohesion.
 - Finally, McDowell did not use maneuver when frontal attack failed or bring more of his reserves into the battle.

Summary/Conclusion

The principles of war are truths proven by history. This battle shows that success in applying one or two of the principles does not guarantee victory. A combat commander planning his strategy and tactics based on his own capabilities and his information of the enemy's capabilities should consider the principles as guidelines not guarantees. He should be aware that there is a synergistic effect that must be considered. Surprise without cohesion or unity of command may result in failure. Leadership and judgement in applying the principles make war an art, not a science.

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